

Shah Hussain a Seraiki Poet or Not

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MUQADDAMAH DIWAN-I-FARID by Zahoor Ahmad Dhareeja

pp 112;price Rs.100(hb);Publishers,Dhareeja Adabi Academy, Dhareeja Nagar,Khanpur

ACCORDING to the younger brother of Zahur Dhareeja, actually this is the forward or prelude of Diwan-i-Farid edited by Maulana Azizur Rahman and first published in the forties of the last century under the patronage of the Nawab of Bahawalpur Sadiq Mohammad Khan. Zahoor has produced the same with this forward in Urdu from the Jhok Publishers Multan.

About 30 pages have been devoted to the opinion of the prominent literary figures about Khawaja Sahib and his poetry. The rest is about some facts about the poet and Dhareeja claims that Seraiki is the oldest language of the Indus valley and all dialects like Hindko, Pothohari, Majhi and Doabi are its dialects. Sindhi was also the part of Seraiki but the British after conquering Sindh oppressed Seraiki and preferred Sindhi which was made medium of instruction in the province.

One prominent protagonist of Seraiki, Dr. Mahr Abdul Haq was of the opinion that Punjabi is not the language of any part of Pakistan. But Dhareeja has a different view. He thinks that two dialects of Seraiki i.e. Majhi (dialect spoken in Kasur, Amritsar, Ferozpur etc) and Doabi (dialect spoken between Bias and Sutlej also known as Doaba Dist Jullundhar) developed in the present Punjabi the most representative of which is Lahori poet of 16th century, Shah Hussain. (p.18).

At another place Dhareeja says; Shah Hussain while sitting in Lahore was writing verse in Seraiki (p.19). Yet, he further asserts this point how can Shah Hussain Lahori's poetry be called Punjabi? (p.17). One wonders in which language or languages Shah Hussain wrote his verse? There is more confusion when Dhareeja says Bulleh Shah (of Kasur) and Shah Murad (of Chakwal) are the best poets of Seraiki (p.39).

This is one aspect of Zahoor Dhareeja's thesis that Khawaj Farid wrote poetry in seven languages (names not given), but he did not write verse in Punjabi, Pushto and Balochi (p.22). While at an earlier stage, he said Punjabi was the developed form of Seraiki dialects of Majhi and Doabi and Hindko it self is Seraiki and Pothohari, the language of Rawalpindi has identical phonetics with Seraiki.

If all the above-mentioned dialects Hindko, Majhi, Doabi and Pothohari originate from Seraiki and are part and parcel of Seraiki language then where stands poor Punjabi? What will Dhareeja say about the

poetry of Baba Farid, Sultan Bahu, Fard Faqir Noshah Ganjbukhsh, Mian Mohammad Bukhsh and Maulvi Ghulam Rasool?

It looks he has born prejudices against Punjabi and Punjabis and in his views only Ranjeet Singh represented Punjab. It is a strange historical coincidence that Ahmad Shah Abdali conquered Multan or the Seraiki area and appointed Pathan from Afghanistan as rulers and Muzaffar Khan was their representative while grand-son of Abdali, Zaman Shah appointed Ranjeet Singh as the ruler and both these rulers appointed by Kabul Darbar clashed in Multan. None of them associated himself with the dialects of their areas and none of them represented. Both had Persian as their official language. Dhareeja is conscious of that and claims that there were many states of Seraiki people during the 18th century, including Bahawalpur, Khairpur, Mulan and Jhal Magsi but none of the rulers of these states bothered to adopt Seraiki as official Language.

Incidentally all had Persian as their language because it was the language of the rulers of Dehli. When under the British, Dehli adopted Urdu as their second language, the state rulers also shifted to Urdu as the second language while English was the first Language which means they were not with their people but with the rulers of Dehli. May be Muslim Mughals or Christian Europeans.

And as far Urdu is concerned Dhareeja out rightly says; Urdu zuban qoum ko Ghulami kay siwa kuchh naheen dey saki (p.9). ("Urdu could not do anything except that it made the nation a slave").

Dhareeja is all bitterness which was not the creed of Khawja Farid whose Diwan he has published with that sort of forward.

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